1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half. This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round the lake.

The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are scattered through the fields and across the lake. These households and a few more a little further off make up the community. These are small farms of the kind we met in Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles off.

Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all related one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder. Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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621 paths crisscrosses the fields in all directions from house to house and across the countryside beyond.

887 Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the village, 573 is the "old men's house." Mrs. Ruin, a neighbor, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village:

> The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?

But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the work day its shortest. Soon after the evening meal they begin to gather. Occasionally this or that habitué may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here," and take their accustomed places.

888 O'Donoghue has the place of honor in the chair to the 542 right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his nephew's wife. The couple have no children and must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm and the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man in occasional matters.

888 O'Donoghue is the "judge" in this gathering. In the 573 nightly discussions which take place around his fireplace, he 521 has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man to whose opinions all must defer. Usually they know he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again a slow and measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing and only occasionally adds a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdotes as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes. When he does, his remarks deal with the "old times."

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the central position

The interlocking net of roads covering Clare high and low must have been fairly complete at an early period. In high country many of the roads were "famine roads," built to give relief during the "bad times." In lower, richer land they are older. They ran originally from one concentration of estates to another, reflecting the older social order. Even today there is still a considerable amount of new road building carried on by local authorities, opening up districts which formerly had little or no communication with the outside world. There are still many farmhouses and village clusters of farmhouses far away from any improved road in higher country. Their inhabitants rely on rough borheens and stony trails leading from the nearest road. Many such isolated houses were originally built in inaccessible parts of hills and bogs to keep their owners from the eyes of bog rangers and estate stewards and to hide them from the threat of eviction.

Today the roads are kept up by the county government and the state. The system of road labor is very old. Private contracts for stones, maintenance, and repair and gang work under county officials are still important sources of outside work for the farm communities and occasions of local relief important in county politics.

The small farmer today uses five principal methods of travel. Choice among these is determined by the nature of one's errand and the status of the traveler.

The motor car is the newest and most costly method of transport. Small farmers do not own motor cars. They hire them from the towns when occasion arises. The motor car is still in process of introduction into the Irish Free State. In the countryside it is used only in time of crisis and high ceremony. If a member of a farm family needs hospital attention, he is removed to the nearest hospital, either in a private motor car or in the free county ambulance. At a wedding and an important funeral a family may engage

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ass-carts among the poultry sellers or with the pigs, but seldom in the corn or cattle markets. 493 494

Another modern vehicle has worked its way into farm life. The bicycle is used by all ages and both sexes. But in poorer districts it is principally used by adult men, especially among the smaller farmers. Children go on foot. The bicycle is an informal and individual means of conveyance, ideal for visiting, for the pursuits and pleasures of young men and women, and for quick trips to the local crossroad center.

Finally, the country people travel a great deal on foot. 481 At work one travels nearly always on foot. Distances are short, and the vehicles one has are needed for carrying. On Sunday most people walk to mass, even where it means a long walk over the fields. In any procession of country life the majority of persons taking part are always afoot. In running petty errands to "friends," neighbors, and the local shop one goes on foot. Habit wears many paths across the fields [487] in many directions. It makes one very expert at avoiding hazards of mud and wet. But nearly all foot journeys find the road soon or late.

To complete the picture of rural travel, one must add 493 perforce two more vehicles. One is very new and just be- 494 ginning to make its influence felt, though only on the main roads between the large cities and towns. This is the motor bus. Today a few persons have begun to travel beyond the market towns to the cities for their more important business, and in the movement lies much of one side of the picture of the decline of the middle-sized towns in rural Ireland. The other and last means of transport is the horse. Only 492 adults among the country people ever ride him, either for sport or for transport. The horse is first a work animal, then a sporting beast. In either case he is the special care and interest of the adult man.

The methods of transport in the countryside are related 000

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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hills, whose rocks were scraped into the smooth rounded forms known as " roches moutonnées," or splintered, in steep rock faces above the ice, into the walls of mountain corries. Widely scattered over the plain and through the marginal valleys from Limerick to Carlow and from Cavan to Antrim are the winding ridges of sand and gravel called eskers. They mark the stages in the retreat of the ice-sheet as it melted away and left its rock rubbish to be sorted out by water into great curving dumps. To-day these " green hills," as they are often called, rise in surprising freshness of contour and colour from the level plain. They are often followed by winding tracks which thus avoid the damp plain. Fig. 2.

Elsewhere the ice left behind a solid residue of clay and boulders, often to a depth of many feet, generally levelled by flooding waters from the ice-edge but sometimes piled into shapely steep-sided hills elongated in the direction in which the ice moved. These drumlins, or " little hills," give much of the border country, from south Down through Armagh and Monaghan to Cavan, Lough Erne and Donegal Bay its characteristic scenery. Their steep sides and the confused drainage of winding streams and lakelets to which they give rise long made the drumlin country a considerable obstacle to movement; and with other physical factors it helped to isolate the north from the rest of the country in early times. Southwards over the western parts of the plain, ice scooped out hollows and blocked rivers to form lakes many of which have been filled up with bog. But on the whole the ice-sheet, through its mantle of deposits, gave more than it took away: " the cold that for a time drove out life, in the end largely contributed to the fertility of Irish land." Fig. 3.

When warmer times returned and plants and animals began to find their way to the outpost of Europe, the land stood higher than to-day. Ireland was then, as it has been through most of its geological history, an integral part of Europe, and the great Irish deer roamed over the continent from the Atlantic to the Baltic. We are now within measurable distance of modern times, say 10,000 years ago, and it is

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were 'melled' with a wooden maul, are sometimes to be seen in the farmyard, and there were a few water-driven 'whin-mills'. Their use is almost forgotten as is the custom of growing a field of whins to provide fodder. This was done in Co. Cavan and it is a recognized method of land utilization in the poorer parts of Brittany. A gorse hedge near the homestead is still popular as a place for drying clothes on washing day. 'Firing being scarce', wrote Gabriel Beranger of the barony of Bargy and Forth, 'they plant all their ditches with furze, which serves them for firing, and is reckoned equal in value with the produce of the land.'[1] Small farmers in Co. Down preferred wide earthen ditches because, as Binns was told: 'we have both sides of the ditch for feeding the cattle, and whins to bruise for the horses'.[2] The economy of the grass-grown ditch becomes clearer when we realize that on boulder-strewn hillsides where wide stone ditches separate the tiny fields a high proportion of the land is sterilized. Such wide earth banks often serve as footpaths where the land is wet, and in Co. Limerick I have seen cart tracks on top of them. This habit may go back to the wide balks between some of the openfield patches, which were used as access ways where the boggy fields were too soft to take a cart. Such double ditches, when faced with stones on both sides, are undoubtedly an old type of fence, for they are characteristic of many raths or Dark Age farmsteads. These 'dry fences' are common in Co. Kerry and also in north Antrim, and they occur in Brittany, and in parts of Anglesey and north Pembrokeshire. In stony country the filling of a double ditch may be of loose stones gathered from the fields, and here again we have ancient examples in the enclosing walls of small cashels which are the equivalent in thin-soiled areas of the raths of the lowlands.

What nearly all these many types of field fences have in common is their untidy appearance. Dry stone walls tend to be cyclopean, lacking the precision of those of north England or the Cotswold country. Rough glacial boulders are a poor substitute for oolite, and one recalls the comment of Sir John Russell that Irish architecture suffered because of the virtual absence of Jurassic rocks in the geological series. Rarely does

[1] Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 192.
[2] J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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native to the country. Around the coasts the sycamore is almost the only tree that persists, for it will stand up to the salt-laden gales everywhere save on the most exposed parts of the west coast. R. U. Sayce has recorded the belief, from Montgomeryshire, that 'sycamore trees keep the fairies away and stop them spoiling the milk',[1] but this bit of lore cannot be of any great antiquity since the tree did not reach Britain from its home in the mountain belt of southern Europe until the sixteenth century. It presumably arose from the association of the tree with the farmyard. In Ireland the sycamore probably came in with the early seventeenth century planters, though the beech may be a medieval or even older introduction. Both trees had many economic uses, especially for dry-coopering, that is the manufacture of provision casks and butter firkins, and the sycamore is an excellent wood for turnery. Later, as the linen industry became mechanized, the beetling mills demanded sycamore for the great beam of the engine and beech for the vertical beetles.

The lay-out of farm buildings seems to have been, in the native single-farms, as haphazard and formless as was that of the houses themselves in an old clachan. As separate farms with outbuildings ('offices') became fashionable improvements after the middle of the eighteenth century, the latter were built for convenience of access and they were put close to the farmhouse, either attached to one end or lying parallel to provide a windbreak. Only in the planted areas does one find old examples of planned 'courtyard farms' where the house and offices enclose a square or rectangular yard. I fancy the stone or wooden 'hovel-stands' with their picturesque mushroom-like staddle-stones are also confined to planted districts. In the west a favourite method of making stacks is to build them about a central pole. (See p. 164.)

The wayside style is another absentee in the native Irish countryside, as is the footpath which is its companion. Short-cuts are rarely worth while in a land of tiny fields, and if there is a right of way there is sure to be a tolerable road. In fact there are so many farm lanes and access ways to mountain, seashore or bog that an economist might regard the amount of land so taken out of cultivation as excessive. It has been

[1] R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 45 (1938).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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calculated that in some thickly settled and much-enclosed townlands the land wasted in ditches may amount to a quarter of the whole area.[1] The peasant proprietor, however, would regard the loss of land as the price he pays for his independence, remembering 'the fights, trespasses, confusion, disputes and assaults' which were 'the natural and unavoidable consequences' of the openfield rundale system.[2] 487

[1] *Devon Commission*, 1, 422.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement of livestock along routes from west to east has been developing since the Middle Ages, when its logical outcome was the export trade in hides from the Irish Sea ports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exports largely took the form of salt beef and butter, but since the early nineteenth century the store cattle trade has been so dominant that it has latterly accounted for half the total export trade of southern Ireland. It involves a movement of cattle not only from west to east but from small farms to large, and from scanty grazings to the lush fattening pastures of Meath or the English lowlands. Apart from small strings of beasts on their way to local fairs, the cattle droves are today most in evidence in the crowded dockside streets of the ports where they are herded on to the cross-channel boats, but until quite recently donkeys and goats purchased at fairs in the west still travelled to the ports on the hoof. The drover-dealers who accompanied them were colourful characters whose experience stood them in good stead in the wider world. These dealers in the unwanted residues of the countryside—in rags and scrap as well as asses and goats—have often set up as rag-and-scrap merchants in the large towns along their routes from Belfast and Dublin to the English fairs, and one of them became Lord Mayor of a Scottish city. Others made big money as pedlars of cloth in America or Australia. Most of these 'pahvees',

[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.*

[i.e., Ballinasloe.- Analyst]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

• 487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, 663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are